The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. XVII. BOSTON, JUNE, 1909. No. 12.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY, EXCEPT AUGUST: 50 cents a year.
Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

CONTENTS OF NO. 12.

THE YEAR OF THE LORD 149
INCREASE OF LIFE. 149
THE STILL HOUR 150
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 151
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL:—
THE NAUGHTY BOY 152
NATURAL HISTORY:—
THE TRUE STORY OF A HUMMING-BIRD . . . 152
A MISADVENTURE 153
CONSISTENCY IN FEATHER-WEARING 154
MACK, THE PARROT 155
A WHIMSICAL WHIM 155
BIOGRAPHY:—
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT 156
THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN 158
THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE 159
IMPORTANT NOTICES 159

THE YEAR OF THE LORD.

Praise him for his budding green,
April's resurrection scene;
Praise him for his shining hours,
Starring all the land with flowers;

Praise him for his tiny seed,
Holding all his world shall need;
Praise him for his summer rain,
Feeding, day and night, the grain;

Praise him for his garden root,
Meadow grass and orchard fruit;
Praise for hills and valleys broad,—
Each the Table of the Lord!

Praise him, then, for snowy rest
Falling soft on Nature's breast;
For his year of wonder done,
Praise to the All-Glorious One!

—*William G. Gannett.*

INCREASE OF LIFE.

II.

The knowledge that life is indeed larger than the little world we see grows upon us in a thousand ways. The charm, always new, of watching a baby's life, rests in our interest in the steps of such growth. The little thing first learns its own hands, that they are its own. A little more, and it knows its mother's face, and that she also is its own. By and by, its world enlarges; and at last it knows the whole nursery, which seems a universe indeed, while it is a novelty, so much larger than the petty world the child was in before.

Such steps as these are really enlarging our life all the time afterward, though we do not perhaps note them with quite such eager curiosity. But it is just such a step when the school-boy, who but yesterday was first in his class and could talk of nothing but the ambitions of the school-room, finds himself the smallest boy in a great mercantile house, where his existence is hardly suspected and nobody knows his name. He learns, by hard rubs perhaps, that the world is much larger than he thought. Yet his chief, the very "grand Cyrus" of them all, the master of masters, has to learn the same lesson. He takes his holiday on some favorable year, he crosses the ocean, he has, or thinks he has, some business with one of the merchant lords of London or of Paris; and, when the interview has been arranged, after some negotiation, he finds that he was never heard of before, that now his name is forgotten, that there are perhaps a hundred others waiting for their turn, and that he, the first tradesman in his own country, may be yet a very small person in the larger world. So in the world of politics, in the world of literature, in the ambitions of fashion and society, precisely because we are infinite beings,—beings whose nature cannot be limited,—we find all the time that there is far more outside of us in life than we have ever yet attained to. We cannot often enough say that life gives us more, Nature gives us more, the more we take. Yes, and the more life gives or Nature gives, the more they offer.

The robin in its nest looks into a world made up of a few leaves and boughs around. As the feathers of its wings grow, it flutters a little from the branch, and is astonished to find that the orchard is so large. The

bird of passage, when the instinct bred by the season carries it far north or far south, learns that the covert of a few trees, orchard, or grove, was nothing to this larger world. Man, of all animals, compasses the whole globe; and then man, in turn, studies the universe outside of it, and finds that this world is a speck, and only a speck, in that universe of whose laws he finds out more and more every day, for they are not beyond the ken of a child of God.

The careful reasoner who, with the little tricks of two or three earthly algebras, untangled the problems of the universe, drops off the house of an earthly tabernacle, sees as he is seen and knows as he is known, and rejoices in the untangled heavenly verities. The faithful friend, who let no hour pass unless he had ministered to this orphan, had braced up yonder hesitant, had lifted him who was fallen, or comforted her who was starving, casts off this frail house of an earthly tabernacle; and, lo! infinite resource with which to minister, no lack of time for endeavor, and no grinding burden of fatigue.

Film by film, shred by shred, this child of God lays off one and another of the environments which fetter him. The baby is not held longer in his mother's arms: he totters alone. At last he is master of the house and may roam where he will. Nay, the day comes when the doubtful mother must let him run outdoors under his own control. He grows to youth or manhood and makes his own home. Not even orders from father or mother rule him longer. Perhaps he passes from land to land, acquires the sway of new languages, and is not bound even to one country. Perhaps his word controls other men. What he writes is read by all thinkers, what he thinks is applied in all laws. Perhaps he startles a generation of sleepers, and they take up their beds and walk. All this steady enlargement of life and power is certain, because he is God's child. The soul in him controls muscle, nerve, sense, fibre, blood-vessels, and brain. The God in him controls the organic frame of an earthly tabernacle. One step more, and the sweet singer, who yesterday wrote some psalm of praise for a few companions, casts off this earthly house of a mortal tabernacle, and joins in the chorus of a nobler and larger worship.—*Edward Everett Hale.*

'Tis nobleness to serve:
Help them who cannot help again.

Emerson.

THE STILL HOUR.

Whichever way the wind doth blow,
Some heart is glad to have it so;
Then blow it east or blow it west,
The wind that blows, that wind is best.

My little craft sails not alone;
A thousand fleets from every zone
Are out upon a thousand seas;
What blows for one a favoring breeze
Might dash another with the shock
Of doom upon some hidden rock.
And so I do not dare to pray
For winds to waft me on my way,
But leave it to a higher will
To stay or speed me, trusting still
That all is well, and sure that He
Who launched my bark will sail with me
Through storm and calm, and will not fail,
Whatever breezes may prevail,
To land me, every peril past,
Within his sheltering heaven at last.

Then, whatsover wind doth blow,
My heart is glad to have it so;
And blow it east or blow it west,
The wind that blows, that wind is best.

—*Caroline A. Mason.*

O Unseen Power that rules and controls the destinies of the children of earth, teach me the symphony of life, so that my nature may be in tune with thine.

Reveal to me the joy of being loving, self-sacrificing, and charitable.

Teach me how to know and play life's game with courage, fortitude, and confidence.

Endow me with wisdom to guard my tongue and temper, and learn with patience the art of ruling my own life for its highest good, with due regard for the privacy, rights, and limitations of other lives.

Help me to strive for the highest legitimate reward of merit, ambition, and opportunity in my activities, ever ready to extend a kindly, helping hand to those who need encouragement and succor in the struggle.

Enable me to give a smile instead of a frown, a cheerful kindly word instead of harshness and bitterness.

Make me sympathetic in sorrow, realizing that there are hidden woes in every life, no matter how exalted or lowly.

If in life's battle I am wounded or tottering, pour into my wounds the balm of hope, and imbue me with courage undaunted to arise and continue the strife.—*From "The Optimist's Prayer," William J. Robinson.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.*]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club, to be printed here.

OFFERS.

"Black Beauty" is offered by Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. John Ferguson, Blackstone, North Carolina, asks for reading for his family, which consists of wife and three small children. He asks especially for "Alice in Wonderland."

2. Harry Quinn and a partner are prospecting and living in a camp at Helena, Nevada, Nye County, sixty-five miles from the nearest railroad. They find themselves many times very lonely and will be thankful for good reading.

3. Gilford Tyson, Wadesboro, North Carolina, asks for "Robinson Crusoe" or "The American Boy."

4. It has been quite a while since I have written you or heard anything from any of you. I have left my old home at Sandidges, Virginia, Route No. 1, and my present address is Aqua, Virginia. I hope some of you will remember me, as it will be quite lonely in a new place till new friends are found. Won't some one please send books or reading of some kind to Miss Mary S. Jones, Concord Depot, Campbell County, Virginia? Thanking most heartily all who have remembered me in the past with both letters and reading matter, and wishing for more, I am most sincerely and gratefully yours, (Miss) Virginia A. Taylor, Aqua, Virginia.

5. Mr. Charles Hawk, Ironsburg, Tennessee, will be glad of good reading for himself and family.

6. Mrs. Charles Osborne, Bowler, Montana, asks for any literature.

7. Mrs. Hallie Teeples, Raymond, Wyoming, living in a lonely place, three miles from a neighbor and five miles from school, will be so thankful to receive any of the following books: "The Last of the Mohicans," "Little Brother and Other Stories," "Fun for the Family," "United States Reader," "Third Reader," "Outdoor Sports for Boys," and any magazines.

8. Mrs. T. A. Gregory of Swansonville, Virginia, wishes to express her thanks to the friend who sends the *Cheerful Letter* paper, also to all sending reading to her. She asks for "Infelice," by Augusta Evans; and "The Wide, Wide World," also some picture books for her little girl about four years old.

9. J. C. Gibson, J. B. Jones, Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Sarah Jones, all of Delve, Newton County, Arkansas, would be very grateful for magazines.

10. The following persons would be very grateful for a magazine occasionally: Jack Orzan, Prairie Rastler Ellepon, Lloyd Clements, Dick Miller, Fred Van Saker, Thomas E. Lee, Red Holland, Anna Higdahl, Emma Orzan, all of Plainview, Meade County, South Dakota.

11. Thornton Hite, Lowesville, Virginia, a boy of twelve years of age, will be glad of suitable reading.

12. About a year ago I wrote to you requesting books, papers, etc. Since then I have received a good deal of reading matter. I have been getting nice post cards, too. I thank each and every one who has sent me anything. I shall be glad to continue to receive anything in the book line. I should be glad to get a dictionary for the benefit of the children that are going to school. My little girl, Annie, eight years old, would like to get "Alice in Wonderland." My next little girl, Fannie Ellen, six years old, would like anything that would suit a child of her age. Hoping many blessings will attend the dear women who send out these things, I am yours sincerely, (Mrs.) L. C. Horton, Elkville, North Carolina.

13. If any one has any of Miss Alcott's books, "Arabian Nights," or any of the "Little Colonel" stories to pass along, will they please communicate with Mrs. Nichols for the address of a young girl confined to her wheel chair and suffering with tuberculosis?

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Miss Cora L. Harrington, from Swatara, Minnesota, to Waukenabo, Aitken County, Minnesota.

We have just learned of the death of Mrs. Lily Satterfield, of Ararat, Virginia, and of Mrs. Jennie I. Satterfield of Mt. Airy, Surry County, North Carolina.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

THE NAUGHTY BOY.

Miss Julia A. Richman, a superintendent of schools in New York City, emphasized the value of individual sympathy, in her recent address before the National Educational Association. She said:—

Cases of individual rescue effected by a kind word crowd upon me.

He was a Terror.

Dominick, the little Italian, the terror of three successive schools, who to-day is not only a fine lad, but has reformed several other boys, changed from a lawless, defiant misdemeanant to the pride of the class—how? By a teacher who said to him, "I think you are trying to-day, dear." Poor little chap! He told his teacher frankly that it was her calling him "dear" which developed in him a determination to please her.

He stood up Straight.

The insolent, defiant Irish boy, driven from room to room, who to-day is working steadily, respectful, law-abiding, ambitious, what worked his reform? A teacher who, in reply to the principal's question, "Well, how is Tom doing in here?" looked at the class in line, and noticing that Tom was standing up straight, said. "Oh, he's going to be all right. He's the best stander in the class." And Tom, poor Tom, the first time he had ever been the best anything, took heart, and worked for further commendation.

Ikey, the little Russian boy, in rags which almost fell from his poor, thin little legs, what changed him from an ugly little outcast to a boy who tried, really tried, to do what was right? A clean suit of clothes, a warm bath, and a daily glass of milk, given by a teacher who sensed the boy's needs.

His First Love-pat.

Have you read Owen Kildare's account of the effect upon him of the first gentle touch he had ever felt?

Seldom in his life as a child had any one said a kind word to him. One day, when a strange woman patted him on the cheek, he almost cried with the joy of it.

"With a light pat on my cheek and one of the sunniest smiles ever shed on me," he says, "she put a penny in my hand. She was gone before I realized what had happened. Somehow I felt that, were she to come back, I could have said to her: 'Say, lady, I haven't got much to give, but I'll give you all me poipers, me pennies, and me knife if you'll do that again!'"

The "Worst Boy."

Go back to your schools. Pick out your so-called worst boys. Find out whether heart-hunger as well as stomach-hunger may not be one of the symptoms of the disease. There is not a teacher in all our broad land who would knowingly let a child's body starve to death for want of food. Why should any child's heart or soul be allowed to starve to death for want of a little sympathy and affection?

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE TRUE STORY OF A HUMMING-BIRD.

Not very long ago, in the vicinity of Washington, on a beautiful afternoon in midsummer, some boys and girls were playing in the shade of the trees, when one of them picked up what seemed to be a ball of soft gray down, about as large as a hickory nut, but having two very bright beadlike eyes, a long bill, no larger than a darning needle, and two clawlike feet.

After the children had all looked and wondered at the waif, it was given to a little girl, who ran home with it.

As soon as the little humming-bird—for that is what it was—found itself in the warm nest made by the soft hand of the girl, it began a mournful peeping sound and opened its bill as widely as possible to indicate that it would very much like to be fed. As the mother of the bird was not there to feed it, the mother of the child prepared some sugar and water, into which she dipped her finger, and, letting a drop form upon the end of it, offered this to the hungry birdling, who hastily and greedily sucked it in through the slender, tubelike bill, and asked for more.

The birdie seemed quite content with its new home on soft cotton in a pasteboard box, in the tent dining-room. It called loudly to be fed at frequent intervals during the afternoon, each time taking a drop or two more of the sweetened water.

The next morning, when the children went to look, they shouted for joy: there upon the edge of the box sat or perched the bird, turning its tiny head from side to side and calling much more loudly for something to eat. As soon as its hunger was satisfied, it became ambitious and tried to fly, but, alas! the first object it touched was an "iceberg," in the shape of an inverted tumbler; and, finding no rest for its feet, it slid down the slippery side and lay helpless until restored again to the nest.

The children were delighted to watch it trying to fly, but after a while the room was deserted by the little folks for the fields, and, when they returned, they were attracted by a whirring sound outside the lattice wall, and there was the mother bird, flying rapidly back and forth, calling to the little one with a peculiar sharp note. And her baby evidently heard, for it nearly twisted its little head off turning around to follow her flight.

There was nothing to prevent the little one from flying out, but, although the mother grew brave enough to come very close, she called in vain, and at last, as twilight fell, she went away; and the little one ate, or drank, its supper, and settled down into its nest for the night.

But very early the next morning, before the children had opened their eyes, the faithful mother bird returned, more determined than ever to rescue her baby. Now she came nearer and nearer, finally darted into the room, and, flying so close to the little one that she touched it, mounted to the top of the tent, and from the pole which supported the roof she called and called to her baby, who kept looking up and flapping its wings as though it said, "I want to, but, oh! I am so afraid."

For some time this interesting play went on, the children meanwhile sitting at the table trying to eat their breakfast, until at last, with one exultant chirp and one great effort, the tiny wings were spread and the baby bird soared upward to where the mother sat, and after a few minutes, in which their joy and satisfaction were plainly shown, away they flew together into the free air and sunshine, and were seen by the children no more.—*Good Housekeeping.*

A MISADVENTURE.

For the Cheerful Letter.

It is difficult to keep pets in a city, where all sorts of dangers lurk for the cat or dog who strays much from home. One cannot bear to make them stay within doors always, and yet, unless they are there, one has them perpetually on one's mind. Yet the task of keeping both dog and cat well and happy in a city house we undertook and carried through with a fair degree of success for many years. We partly cut the Gordian knot by establishing a small house in a tiny back yard, the only out-of-doors space the home afforded, for both animals to occupy at night. The house was of two stories, the lower one for the dog, and the upper, with only a small round opening by way of door, for the cat; and these rooms were so stuffed with hay that a warm and cosey nest was provided for each. They proved *so* cosey that both animals could sleep there in comfort on any but the very coldest winter nights, as was often proved by their choosing to go out of doors for the night when given the option of staying in the house.

Of course the cat could wander at will through the neighborhood, for fences were not the formidable barrier to him that they were to his companion; and I have no doubt it was often aggravating to the Collie to see him skip off for a little diversion and exercise.

But on one occasion he did not decide with his usual wisdom. During the night there came one of the sudden, heavy downfalls of snow that sometimes occur, when a few hours will do the work of a day in piling up the drifts, and in the morning no Conrad answered to our call. We were sorry and knew that he had miscalculated; but we expected him to appear at any moment, and had a comfortable breakfast ready for him when he should return. But the day passed and he did not come, and the next morning still there was no Conny. Four or five days went by, during which we made visits of inquiry at every house in the neighborhood; but no one had seen him, and at last we desisted and gave him up for lost.

One morning, before daybreak, however, I heard one short, sharp bark from our Collie, and it occurred to me that it might be a bark of welcome. So it was in the greatest trepidation that, as soon as it was light enough, I looked out into the yard. What a sight greeted me! Just as my own head was put out of the window, a soft, gray, furry one was thrust out of the small hole in the little house below, and I thankfully realized that the dear wanderer had found his way home

What a changed cat he was from that time! We could only guess at his experiences during those days of wandering by their effect upon him. He had always been a lordly sort of creature, exacting much at-

tention from his willing slaves, the family, but now he could not do enough to show his love and his delight at having found us again. He had a sweet way of rubbing his soft head under our chins, and now we were obliged to submit to this caress in season and out of season, and he was never weary of telling us how happy he was at such an ending of a terrible experience.—*A. B. S.*

CONSISTENCY IN FEATHER-WEARING.

Audubonites may be divided into two classes as regards their attitude toward the wearing of feathers,—the moderates and the total abstainers.

The moderates hold that they violate none of the interests of bird protection in its fullest sense by wearing the plumes of game or food birds, or those of the ostrich, which is as legitimately raised for its feathers as a sheep for its wool. In short, they see the necessity of keeping feather wearing within conservative bounds, and elect to take the individual responsibility of so doing.

The total abstainers say: "Let us break ourselves altogether of the feather-wearing habit. We shall be more conspicuously consistent as bird protectionists, and we shall not be called upon to settle fine points and follow difficult boundaries. We need not know anything about plumage, and never have to decide whether the wings used by milliners are really those of food birds or the pinions of song birds disguised with dye, nor if the fearfully manufactured confections are the heads of real owls and parrots twisted out of all semblance to nature, or merely compounds of chicken feathers and celluloid." Both of these attitudes are equally useful to the cause if they are maintained consistently, but inevitably the way of the total abstainers is the easier of the two. The total abstainers need not, to quote Hamlet, "know a hawk from a handsaw." While in order to be consistent, the moderates must be bird students of no mean intelligence if they would keep safely on the exceedingly narrow pathway that divides the feathers that may be from those that *must not* be worn, not alone by Audubonites, but by any woman who has either sense or sensibility. A pathway? A slack wire is the better simile, so treacherous is the footing.

What is it that causes the downfall of many of the moderates, who know the common birds fairly well, and could not be hoodwinked into buying egret plumes or dyed swallow wings?

You can guess easily, for you have seen the tempter protruding above and behind the up-to-date outing hat the entire season, and, unless you are unusually lucky, it has poked you reproachfully in the eye, as if calling your attention to its plight.

"The quill, of course!"

Yes, the quill is the mischief-maker. At its introduction many years ago, the quill was at first the harmless feather of a crow, or a goose quill, sedate enough to make a pen for a judge. After awhile it took on dabs of color and even spangles, but all this time it was a good safe outing and rainy day ornament.

Then a change came. The quill grew suddenly longer, with a curl to its tip that made one wonder, if natural, how its original wearer had lived with it. This quill, however, did not stay well in curl, and less than a year ago it was displaced by the reigning favorite, a quill as aggressively impertinent as any that decks the cap of the operatic Mephisto, but not half as becoming to the wearer.

Now comes the inconsistency of the moderates. They wear these quills blindly, because they have not studied birds thoroughly enough to distinguish between the plumages except when aided by decided color. The sentence, "It is only a quill," covers deadly sins of omission. I have cornered several women who are what might be called aggressive Audubonites: "Do you know that the notched quill in your hat is a pinion of the American eagle?" "Oh, no, you must be mistaken. It surely is only a goose, or perhaps a turkey feather, and besides,"—drawing herself up with superior wisdom—"eagles are very rare birds. They fly so high it is very difficult to shoot them, and I know at least fifty people who are wearing these quills."

Rare? yes, pinion of peerless flight! But what bird can fly so high or find so eery a resting-place as to escape the "desire of the eye" of fashion? Pause a moment, well-meaning sisters of "little knowledge." Hold a quill class and lay your outing hats on the dissecting table. Study out the things you have been wearing, and you will be wiser, and I hope sadder also, resolving either to join the total abstainers, or to devote enough time to bird study to be consistent in your actions.

"But," you may say, "we are consistent even now. The eagle is neither a song bird, an insect eater, nor a game bird, and from an economic standpoint it can only be considered as a bird of prey and an eater of wastage."

Yes, this is all true, and yet, in the higher view of life, the poetic value of things must take rank with the practical. And what

bird expresses wild grandeur and poetry of motion in so great a degree as the eagle? What has Burroughs recently said of it? "The days on which I see him are not quite the same as the other days. I think my thoughts soar a little higher all the rest of the morning. I have had a visit from a messenger of Jove. The lift or range of those great wings has passed into my thought."

Pegasus harnessed to a plough, or "Cæsar dead and turned to clay," stopping a hole "to keep the wind away," would not be a greater misuse than thus plucking the pinions of our national bird of freedom to act as rudders to women's hats.—*Mabel Osgood Wright.*

MACK, THE PARROT.

Mack has a masculine dislike of flattery. Some one said to him,—

"You are a pretty birdie-boy."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Mack with decision. "No! Just boy!"

I handed him a bit of food one day just at the wrong moment, and he resented it by giving me a nip of my finger. I said, reproachfully, "Oh, that's too bad!"

Leaving the crumb where he could see it, and not reach it, I went away for perhaps ten minutes; and, when I returned, ignored him utterly, a punishment which always takes effect.

"Hulloa!" he called out. "I'se sorry!" And he was angelic for months after.

As the "rolled oats" are about to be prepared for breakfast, he gets uneasy, and calls continually, "Mackie, Mackie." When given a good teaspoonful, he falls to eating them with great satisfaction. Seeing a dish of raw cranberries upon a table, he called out,—

"I like little apples!" and ate some of them, probably hoping to find more seeds than he did, for since then they seem to have lost their charm.

One night Mack, like many another boy, did not feel willing to go to bed. When carried to his sleeping-room, he made himself as heavy as possible,—just as children sometimes do. When placed for the night, he sat down upon the floor of his cage and began to cry.

"Oh," said Lu, "get up on your perch, and I will tell you about the ladies who have come to see you to-day. Aunty Hoyt came, and Mrs. N. and Mackie was so glad to see them."

Instantly he climbed up on his perch, looking very happy and contented, and was soon sound asleep without another murmur.

A young friend of the family came in to use the piano while she was setting some words to music. At first Mack was all animation; but, finding that the performance did not go on so smoothly as might be, he sang out to me, in a loud human voice,—

"Helen!"

"What?"

"I don't like it!"

Mark's tropical nature sometimes rebels against the quiet of a New England Sunday afternoon, especially if the sky be overcast and dull. As evening comes on, there is but one way of relieving his *ennui*,—to go to the piano and sing something by Mendelssohn, Schubert, or, more particularly, Robert Franz. The sustained tones of the latter delight him, and he ventures to help a little on some of the higher notes. That remarkable song by Franz, "Oh, thank Me Not." fairly takes him off from his feet. It is all very strange and far beyond my comprehension. I can better understand his love for this song by Keller,

> "Oh, could I teach the nightingale
> Three little words to number."

In this he gives us perceptible assistance singing with much *gusto*.—*Helen M. Knowlton.*

A WHIMSICAL WHIM.

FOR THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

Maria Jane Tabintha Sim,
The prided cat of Master Jim,
Bethought herself of a whimsical whim
To bring delight to the family of Sim.

Now Sarah Ann was a nice young girl
Who wore her hair in puffs and curl,
Spent day and night in society's whirl
The same as any other nice young girl.

Upon her hair with its golden shine
She wore a hat with feathers nine,
A bird with brilliant plumage fine
And two glass eyes with golden shine.

Now Tabintha's kitten, one bright day,
When all the folks had gone away,
Espied that hat while she was at play
And ate the bird on that bright day.

So Maria Jane, the mother cat,
Concocted a scheme as she lay on the mat;
She'd catch a bird for Sarah's hat,
So thought Maria, the mother cat.

Forthwith she went to the garden wall,
And caught a goldfinch, bright and small,

Then plodding home again into the hall
Left naught but feathers upon the wall.

Filled with delight went the poor old cat
And placed the bird on Sarah's hat;
But Sarah screamed when she saw that
And straightway banished the poor old cat.

There sat Maria Tabintha Sim
Disgusted with the results of her whim.
"'Tis permitted man alone to sin
For vanity," said Tabintha Sim.
—*Pearl McCausland, Sacramento, California.*

BIOGRAPHY.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

If ever there was a poet of whom it is not necessary to ask whether he lives in town or country it is Mr. Bryant. Winds breathe soft or loud; sunshine or shadow flits over the landscape; leaves rustle and birds sing wherever his verses are read. No need of carrying the book out-of-doors to aid the illusion: its own magic is irresistible, and brings out of doors wherever it goes. Here is a mind whose

> "Raptures are not conjured up
> To serve occasion of poetic pomp,
> But genuine"—

and such as could not be excited or satisfied with pictures of what it loves.

It is consistent, therefore, when we find the poet't home, a great, old-time mansion, so embosomed in trees and vines that we can hardly catch satisfactory glimpses of the bay on which it lies, through the leafy windows, of which an overhanging roof prolongs the shade. No greener, quieter, or more purely simple retreat can be found, none with which the owner and his tastes and occupations are more in keeping.

The house stands at the foot of a woody hill which shelters it on the east, facing Hempstead Harbor, to which the flood-tide gives the appearance of a lake, bordered to its very edge with trees, through which at intervals are seen farm-houses and cottages.

The village at the head of the harbor was long called North Hempstead, but as there already quite Hempsteads enough in Queen's County to perplex future topographers, the inhabitants united in desiring a more distinctive title and applied to Mr. Bryant for his aid in choosing one. This is not so easy a matter as it seems at first glance; and in defect of all express guidance in the history of the spot, and desiring, too, a name at once musical in itself and agreeable in its associations, Mr. Bryant proposed Roslyn, the town annals declaring that where the British evacuated the island in 1781, "The Sixtieth, or Royal American, Regiment marched out of Hempstead to the tune of Roslyn Castle." The name is not too romantic for the place. One can hardly believe this a bit of Long Island, which is by no means famed for romantic scenery.

The house is surrounded with square columns and a heavy cornice. These help to shade a wide and ample piazza, shut in still more closely by tall trees and clustering vines, so that from within the house is one bower of greenery. The library occupies the north-west corner,—and we need hardly say that of all the house this is the most attractive spot, not only because besides ample store of books, it is supplied with all that can minister to quiet and refined pleasure, but because it is, par excellence, the haunt of the poet and his friends.

The collection of books is not large, but widely various, Mr. Bryant's tastes and pursuits leading him through the entire range of literature, from the Fathers to Shelley, and from Cuvier to Jean Paul. In German, French, and Spanish he is proficient, and Italian he reads with ease, so all these languages are well represented in the library. He turns naturally from the driest treatise on politics or political economy to the wildest romance or most tender pome.

The library has not, however, power to keep Mr. Bryant from the fields, in which he seeks health and pleasure a large part of every day that his editorial duties allow him to pass at home. And it is under the open sky, and engaged in rural matters, that Mr. Bryant is seen to advantage; that is, in his true character. It is here that the amenity and natural sweetness of disposition, sometimes clouded by the cares of life and the untoward circumstances of business intercourse, shine gently forth under the influences of Nature, so dear to the heart and tranquillizing to the spirits of her child. Little children cluster about the grave man's steps or climb his shoulders in triumph; and serenest eyes meet his in fullest confidence, finding there none of the sternness of which casual observers sometimes complain.

The father of Mr. Bryant was a man of taste and learning,—a physician and an habitual student,—and his mother—not to discredit the general law which gives able mothers to eminent men—was a woman of excellent understanding and high character, remarkable for judgment and decision as for faithfulness to her domestic duties.

And here, in the little village of Cummington, Mass., where William Cullen Bryant was born in 1794, he began at ten years of age to write verses, which were printed in the Northampton newspaper of that day,—the *Hampshire Gazette*. A year earlier he had written rhymes which his father criticised and taught him to correct.

Precocity like this too often disappoints its admirers, but Bryant went on without faltering, and at fourteen wrote a satirical poem called the "Embargo," which is, perhaps, one of the most wonderful performances of the kind on record. The poem was published, in company with a few shorter ones, at Boston in 1808. A short time afterward the author entered Williams College, and greatly distinguished himself during two years, at the end of which time he obtained an honorable discharge, intending to complete his education at Yale,—a design which was, however, never carried into effect. He studied law, first with Judge Howe of Washington, afterwards with Mr. William Baylies of Bridgewater, and in 1815 was admitted to the bar at Plymouth. He practised law a single year at Plainfield, near his native place, and then removed to Great Barrington in Berkshire, where, in 1821, he married Miss Frances Fairchild, whose portrait is exquisitely shadowed forth, to those who knew her, in that tenderest, most domestic, and most personal poem that Bryant ever wrote, "The Future Life."

In 1824 Mr. Bryant wrote a considerable number of papers for the *Literary Gazette*, published in Boston; and in 1825, by the advice of his excellent and lamented friend, Henry D. Sedgwick, he removed to New York and became one of the editors of the New York *Review*, in conjunction with Henry James Anderson. At the end of six months this gentleman, between whom and Mr. Bryant there has ever subsisted a strong friendship, was appointed Professor of Mathematics in Columbia College, and Rodert C. Sands took his place as associate editor of the *Review*. The *Review*, however, was not destined to as long a life as it deserved, and at the end of the year Mr. Bryant was engaged as an assistant editor of the *Evening Post*. The next year he became one of the proprietors of the paper.

The first general collection of his works was in 1832, when he gave to the world in one volume all the poems he was willing to acknowledge.

In 1834 Mr. Bryant sailed with his family to Europe. In 1843 Mr. Bryant refreshed himself by a visit to the Southern States, and passed a few weeks in Florida. "The White-Footed Deer," with several other poems, was published a year after. In 1845 Mr. Bryant visited England, Scotland, and the Shetland Islands for the first time; and during the next year a new collection was made of his poems. This edition, published at Philadelphia, is enriched with a beautiful portrait by Cheney,—the best in our opinion ever yet published. March, 1849, saw Mr. Bryant in Cuba, and in the summer of the same year he visited Europe for the third time. The letters written during his various journeys and voyages were collected and published in the year 1850 by Mr. George Palmer Putnam.

Mr. Bryant's habits of life have a smack of asceticism, although he is the disciple of none of the popular schools, which, under various forms, claim to rule the present world in that direction. Milk is more familiar to his lips than wine. He eats sparingly of animal food, but he is by no means afraid to enjoy roast goose lest he should outrage the names of his ancestors, like some modern enthusiasts. He loves music, and his ear is finely attuned to the varied harmonies of wood and wave. His health is delicate, yet he is very seldom ill; his life laborious, yet carefully guarded against excessive and exhausting fatigue. Placable we can perhaps hardly call him, for impressions on his mind are almost indelible; but it may with the strictest truth be said that it requires a great offence or a great unworthiness to make an enemy of him, so strong is his sense of justice.

We follow Mr. Bryant to Roslyn, see him musing on the pretty rural bridge that spans the fish-pond, or taking the oar in his daughter's fairy boat, or pruning his trees, or talking over farming matters with his neighbors; or—to return to that spot whence we set out some time ago—sitting calm and happy in that pleasant library surrounded by the friends he loves to draw about him, or listening to the prattle of infant voices, quite as much at home there as under their own more especial roof—his daughter's—within the same enclosure.

In person Mr. Bryant is tall, slender, symmetrical, and well poised; in carriage eminently firm and self-possessed. He is fond of long rural walks and of gymnastic exercises, on all which his health depends. Poetical composition tries him severely,—so severely that his efforts of that kind are necessarily rare. His are no holiday verses, and those who urge his producing a long poem are, perhaps, proposing that he should, in gratifying their admiration, build for

himself a monument with a crypt beneath. Let us rather content ourselves with asking "a few more of the same," especially of the later poems. Let him more and more give a human voice to woods and waters, and, in acting as the accepted interpreter of Nature, speak fearlessly to the heart as well as the eye.—*Caroline H. Kirkland, in "Little Journeys to the Homes of American Authors."**

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

(Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper).

I.

DOUBLE CROSS WORD ENIGMA.

In game, but not in puzzle.
In lace, but not in silk.
In Arkansas, but not in Idaho.
In fire, but not in sea.
In opinion, but not in Rome.
In conceal, but not in bury.
In lead, but not in tin.
In day, but not in sunshine.
My whole gives the names of two Martyr Presidents.

II.

FLOWER ANAGRAMS.

1. In a grade.
2. One lucky she.
3. A wee pest.
4. Chant mus rhyme.
5. Me in a rug.
6. Until Pa.

—*Selected.*

III.

HEROES AND HEROINES.

In what book do they figure?
1. John, Duke of Bedford.
2. Rebecca.
3. John Hamilton Barclay.
4. Maggie Tulliver.
5. Hilary Vane.
6. Hester Prynne.

IV.

ACROSTIC.

All of the words described contain the same number of letters. When rightly guessed and written one below the other, the diagonal, beginning with the upper left-hand letter and ending with the lower right-hand letter, will spell the name of a common flower.

1. A college in New Hampshire.
2. A kind of weariness.
3. A colonial governor of Virginia.
4. A king of Spain.
5. A city in Texas.
6. A French explorer and founder of Quebec.
7. A county in Massachusetts.
8. A musical instrument.
9. A historical town in Massachusetts.

Answers to puzzles in the May number.

I. A ZIGZAG.—

T E N T
A R E A
B A Y S
D A M P
T O Y S
D R A W
I D L E
E M I T
L E A D
S A N D

II. BURIED CITIES.—1. Rome. 2. Paris. 3. Saratoga. 4. Stoughton. 5. Nineveh.

III. SOBRIQUETS.—1. James I. of England. 2. Richard I. of England. 3. George IV. of England. 4. Henry VIII. of England. 5. William IV. of England.

IV. NAMES OF TREES.—Yew (You), Plane (Plain), Medlar Beech (Beach), O-range, O-live, Tea Tree.

Answers to puzzles in the June number.

I. DOUBLE CROSS WORD ENIGMA.—Garfield–McKinley.

II. FLOWER ANAGRAMS.—1. Gardenia. 2. Honeysuckle. 3. Sweet Pea. 4. Chrysanthemum. 5. Geranium. 6. Petunia.

III. HEROES AND HEROINES.—1. The Caged Lion. 2. Ivanhoe. 3. Lieutenant-Governor. 4. Mill on the Floss. 5. Mr. Crewe's Career. 6. Scarlet Letter.

IV. ACROSTIC.—

D A R T M O U T H
L A S S I T U D E
D I N W I D D I E
F E R D I N A N D
G A L V E S T O N
C H A M P L A I N
H A M P S H I R E
A C C O R D I O N
L E X I N G T O N

*Written in 1853.

HATS.

"Hats is hats" will not be so funny as "Pigs is Pigs." Indeed, the foregone shortage of anything to equal that idyl of guinea-pig domesticity has become a bromidiom. It enables Ellis Parker Butler to sit down beside Rudyard Kipling among those who have struck twelve and thereby struck out. But the trouble this time isn't merely with Butler: it is with us—and hats! No longer a laughing matter, those monstrosities excite rancor. They stir the most venomous instincts of the human heart. Owing to the increased absurdity of hats, there are only 21½ per cent. as many Christians in America as there were three months ago.

Horrible are the tales one hears concerning the barbaric origin of the peach-baskets, chopping-bowls, and inverted foot-baths now prevalent. The other day, as your clerk was pricing potted asphodels in a shop kept by a Greek, the florist saw a hat going by, and flew into a perfect passion. His whole moral nature rose up against that hat, till he raged like any aurist. He held himself in some measure responsible, since he had served as interpreter to a posse of milliners who were hunting fashions among the most savage and impossible natives of the Isles of Greece. His wrath, as he recounted his disgrace, was terrific. Four asphodels lay down and died.

All this may appear trivial. I protest that it is not. Unless we make a determined effort to control ourselves, hats will blast our composure, blight our happiness, unseat our morals, and cancel our hope of heaven. Nobody knows what the milliners next intend, though I hear of the hat troglodytic, the hat limousine, the feminine stove-pipe hat relieved with awfully fetching little wreaths of stuffed baboons, and other futurities too scandalous for mention during Holy Week. Whereas women were once vain of their personal appearance, nothing is any longer allowed to stand between them and hats. We should prepare for the worst. We should steel our æsthetic natures while it is yet day.

This may be gone about in two ways. One way is to subscribe to *L'Illustration*, wherein are figured the modes which, when cast off as no longer sufferable in Paris, will be taken up in Boston. Thus one acquires that familiarity which breeds content. One becomes educated down to the hat. The other way is to employ suggestion. Let the victim of hatophobia say to himself, when he is in a placid mood and just on the point of falling asleep: "No matter how heinous the hat, it scares me not. Besides, 1915 is not far away, and, before Boston can be transformed into the finest city in the world, hats will have to be reformed. I know there's nothing in this, but I hereby tuck the idea into the cellar of my brain, where it will bear fruit like the mushroom." By repeating this suggestion constantly and as a beverage, the patient acquires an inner peace such as is commonly arrived at only by assassinating a milliner.—*The Boston Evening Transcript.*

The Editor would be glad to receive the following numbers of the *Cheerful Letter*, all for 1904: July, August, September, October, and November. Please send these directly to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

COLLARS FOR CATS.

It has been a difficult question whether a cat should or should not wear a collar. In the country, especially, there is danger that the collar will catch on a bush or a twig, and pussy will not be able to release himself. On the other hand, a cat without a collar is regarded as a poor defenceless tramp without an owner or protector: with a collar, he is at once recognized as somebody's pet and property. One cat owner has solved the problem by an elastic collar, which, if caught on a twig, at once stretches, so that pussy can pull his head out. If not absolutely secure, it is at any rate safer than a stiff leather collar.

PROTECT THE BIRDS AND TREES.

Don't you forget! If there were no birds, man could not live on the earth, and birds are decreasing on this country. . . . Neither could man live on the earth without trees. Great nations have perished from the earth for want of trees, and once fertile lands have become a barren wilderness,—"Oh! Woodman, spare that tree."

There is, in my judgment, no more commanding public duty than attendance at church on a Sunday. The greater the man's influence, . . . the greater and more imperative the duty.—*Senator George F. Hoar.*

The only failure a man ought to fear is failure in cleaving to the purpose he sees to be best.—*George Eliot.*

All religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good.—*Swedenborg.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discourage — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of an instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

LIBRARY NOTICE.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to start a circulating library in any small community needing one, providing proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references supplied.

Apply to Mrs. Irene C. Rees, 51 Orchard Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Headquarters of the Cheerful Letter Exchange are at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, may be found there on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

There will be no monthly meetings of the Cheerful Letter Exchange during the summer months. Notice will be given of the first meeting held in the autumn.

The Home Study Work of the Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to help those who wish to improve their education. Lessons will be given in all subjects which can be taught by correspondence, such as Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Algebra, all branches of English, History, Botany, Geography, Languages, Drawing, etc,

Requests for these lessons should be sent to Mrs. Annie F. Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to Headquarters.

The Editor asks POSTMASTERS who send notices of changes of address not to send these notices to the Editor, but to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Any subscriber not receiving the paper regularly is requested to notify the Secretary.

Chairman, Miss Helen L. Bayley, 399 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Secretary, Mrs. Lily Blunt Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.